



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<http://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

Alma 12, Review of the Feast of Tabernacles Drama

Author(s): LeGrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks

Source: *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?: The Psalms in Israel's Temple Worship in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2011

Page(s): 556–558

Archived by permission of author, LeGrand L. Baker.

<http://www.legrandlbaker.org/>

Alma 12, Review of the Feast of Tabernacles Drama

One of the most striking aspects of Alma's conversation with Zeezrom—also heard and understood by others who were in the audience—is that it was not the kind of setting where Alma would be expected to introduce new concepts that they had never heard before. Yet these chapters are among the “deepest doctrinal” chapters in the Book of Mormon, which in turn implies that Zeezrom had an amazingly profound understanding of the gospel. This implies either that he had been a student of the scriptures but had gotten off onto some pretty thin ice or else that the “deep” doctrines Alma was discussing were generally known among all of the Nephites. In chapter 12, Alma confronted Zeezrom with the covenants he had made in this world in chapter 13 he clobbered him with the covenants he had made in his premortal existence. Chapter 12 focused on the covenants associated with the temple drama of the Feast of Tabernacles which concluded with the invitation:

34 Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest.

But it included the warning:

35 And whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest (Alma 12:34-35).

Before issuing that invitation and that warning, Alma had reviewed the most relevant parts of the drama:

28 And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man [that is, at the Council in Heaven when the decisions and assignments were made], behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;
29 Therefore he sent angels [We don't know how many, three, perhaps.] to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory. [The object of the

In the Book of Mormon.

angels' coming was to teach people how to enter God's presence.]

30 And they [the people] began from that time forth to call on his name [so the angels taught them how to pray]; therefore God conversed with men [the Father himself spoke], and made known unto them the plan of redemption ["redeem" in the Book of Mormon often means to enter God's presence (Ether 3:13; 2 Nephi 1:15, 2:1-3; Helaman 8:23)], which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to [that is, these were the methods or teaching tools he used for instructions] their faith [*pistis*, the substance and evidence of the covenants⁷⁹⁸] and repentance [repentance is a very efficient teacher] and their holy works ["holy" means holy, so "holy works" were probably the ordinances and covenants performed during the ancient temple drama; that is, the ordinances were also a source of instruction].

31 Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal ["temporal" is time-related, so he was probably talking about the commandments associated with linear time] and becoming as gods, knowing good *from* evil [that is very different from "good *and* evil"], placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good——

32 Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption [again, having taught them how to come into his presence], that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness [righteousness is *zedek*, which is correctness in priesthood and temple things, so the second death he was talking about is the state of being without *zedek*-type blessings]; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power [without *zedek*, one cannot come into God's presence], for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God.

33 But God did call on men, in the name of his Son (this being the plan of redemption which was laid), saying: If ye will repent and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son;

34 Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins;

⁷⁹⁸ See the chapter called, "Meaning of Faith—*pistis*."

Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship

and these shall enter into my rest.

35 And whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest.

36 And now, my brethren, behold I say unto you, that if ye will harden your hearts ye shall not enter into the rest of the Lord; therefore your iniquity provoketh him that he sendeth down his wrath upon you as in the first provocation, yea, according to his word in the last provocation as well as the first, to the everlasting destruction of your souls; therefore, according to his word, unto the last death, as well as the first.

37 And now, my brethren, seeing we know these things, and they are true, let us repent, and harden not our hearts, that we provoke not the Lord our God to pull down his wrath upon us in these his second commandments which he has given unto us; but let us enter into the rest of God, which is prepared according to his word (Alma 12:28-37).